

basketball team for their victory in the 2015 Texas Class 5A State Basketball Championship. We are proud of your accomplishment, and we share in the pride and excitement felt by the city of Lancaster, Texas, the Superintendent of Lancaster I.S.D., Mr. Michael McFarland, the Principal of Lancaster High School, Mr. Michael Showell and the entire school.

#### HONORING DEVIN MCCOMBS

#### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Devin McCombs. Devin is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Devin has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Devin has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Devin has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Devin McCombs for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

#### BIANCA MARTINEZ

#### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bianca Martinez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Bianca Martinez is a 12th grader at Standley Lake High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Bianca Martinez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Bianca Martinez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

#### HONORING LT. COLONEL GREG GADSON

#### HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of America's finest, Lt. Colonel

Greg Gadson who is in command of Ft. Belvoir in Virginia, a graduate of West Point in 1989. Greg was also a star linebacker on the United States Army football team. Greg, a twenty-year veteran, has received three bronze stars and a purple heart. While serving in Operation Iraq Freedom, he was almost killed as the commander of a surge unit by an IED explosion, losing both of his legs. He has since done nothing but climbed mountain after mountain. He is also well-known as an inspirational public speaker, and many give him credit for helping inspire the New York Giants to their Super Bowl XLVI season. He has also appeared in the movie "Battleship" and truly is an American hero and a man for all seasons. I submit this poem, penned in his honor by Albert Carey Caswell.

#### HOLD THAT LINE

Hold  
That  
Line  
All in our lifetimes  
Past what new goal lines will we so drive?  
When, it all so seems our backs are up  
against the wall to find  
All in these the moments of our lives  
Coming off that line  
All in hearts now carried deep  
What promises to ourselves will we so keep?  
To find the faith and courage to compete  
To strive  
Will we get up and fight?  
When it all so lies on the line  
And hold  
That  
Line  
Or will we give in,  
In these our darkest of all nights as they  
begin?  
Or will we go deep?  
All in our hearts of honor so to seek  
Whether, on football fields of green  
Or out upon most heroic battlefields of honor  
seen  
You Lt. Colonel Gadson,  
Have always gleamed  
Will our hearts choose to stand and fight,  
To compete?  
All in the seeds we've sown so deep  
All in our hearts to reap  
Emanating from somewhere inside,  
So down so very deep  
Is the place Lt. Colonel,  
Where all of your promises you would so  
keep  
All in your strength in honor which speaks  
To be the best as you would seek  
All in your actions,  
And deeds  
Firing out across that line to death to beat  
Tackling all of those obstacles in your way  
to compete  
As so gallantly you sow heroism seeds  
As why in the game of life you shine so bril-  
liantly  
As it's your faith Greg you were so to keep  
Running from end to end,  
As up ahead you would lead  
To take control and command  
To hold  
That  
Line  
As there you'd stand  
When this battle before you so lie  
As across that goal line of life for victory  
you'd strive  
All because of men like you Colonel who so  
courageously compete  
We all may live in peace  
Because, in the game of life  
It's all about digging in,

And digging in deep  
Through thick and thin,  
How far we are all willing to go for victory  
to reach

To  
Hold  
That  
Line  
To walk through that valley of death,  
With clenched fists to one day Heaven reach  
For these are the things in life which speak  
And who have we saved?  
And who have we blessed?  
And what have we taught to pass that test?  
By all our actions, whom have we reached  
By our examples to beseech  
Will we stand up and go deep?  
As have you Colonel,  
As to such new heights you'd so reach  
In this new battle you began,  
And you so chose to fight and stand  
While, all in the midst of hell  
As your most courageous heart began to  
swell  
And you had to start all over again  
Without your once strong legs upon which  
you so ran  
As you looked down as the red blood ran  
As in that moment your new battle so began  
Being from The Point,  
Your heart gave you a command  
To hold  
That  
Line  
As once again it was first and goal  
With your back to the wall  
As you had to plug up all those holes,  
And somehow find the strength to stand  
To tackle all that misery at hand  
And somehow hold  
That  
Line  
As you had done before,  
Time and time again  
As somehow you got up and stood,  
And started your whole life over as you  
would  
Listening to your heart,  
As you brought tears to all our eyes  
Thanking your Father and your brothers for  
being alive  
As a winner in that game of life you crossed  
that recovery goal line  
As Greg you crushed it  
As death you sacked it  
Firing out to victory to find  
And Colonel,  
If I ever have a son  
I pray to God,  
He could lead a life like yours as won  
Who when it was all on the line,  
Did not thing think twice  
To win that day, that fight  
As a winner before us now stands here this  
night  
Because it's on our legs we stand  
But it's with our hearts we run to daylight  
And we  
Hold  
That  
Line  
For Greg you are Army strong  
And why such men as you and MacArthur to  
The Point so belong  
Whose hearts of honor in history will live on  
Hoo ah

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I ask everyone to continue to pray for our country and for our military men and women that protect it.

God bless the United States of America.

HONORING THE CAREER AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DUNKIRK FIRE CHIEF KEITH AHLSTROM

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and accomplishments of heroic member of the Western New York community, Dunkirk Fire Chief Keith Ahlstrom, on the occasion of his retirement after a remarkable career.

Since joining the Fire Department in 1979, Ahlstrom has provided wonderful leadership, serving as chief for the last 8 years. His team of 25 paid firefighters and numerous volunteers work together to provide safety for the residents of Dunkirk. Ahlstrom follows his brother, who also recently retired from the fire service, but his 35 years of committed work will not be forgotten.

Along with his tenure as Fire Chief, Keith Ahlstrom also served as valuable member of the community, spending time as a high school baseball umpire and serving as the most senior Chautauqua County legislator. Ahlstrom looks forward to spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to deeply thank Keith Ahlstrom for his dedicated years of service and sacrifice for his community. We wish him all of the greatest happiness in his future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MAIME ERNA STRIEBER SHEPPERD

**HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Maime Erna Strieber Shepperd. Maime passed away in January, just weeks after celebrating her ninety-seventh birthday. Bright from a young age, Maime graduated high school as class valedictorian at the age of fifteen and enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin Journalism School. It was at the University of Texas where she met her husband of 51 years, the late John Ben Shepperd. They were married shortly after her graduation.

Maime and John raised four children together, living in both Austin and Odessa throughout their marriage. She was first-lady to John's political career, first as Texas Secretary of State and then as Attorney General. When the family moved to Odessa, Maime got involved with many cultural, philanthropic, and political organizations. She served on the board for the West Texas Rehabilitation Center and founded the Crystal Ball, an annual benefit event. She was also involved as a board member for the Midland-Odessa Symphony, and was tapped by the New York Metropolitan Opera to serve as their West Texas representative.

During Lyndon Johnson's campaign for president in 1964, Maime served as the Chairwoman of the Ladies for Lyndon West Texas committee. She also joined Lady Bird Johnson on the whistle-stop Lady Bird Special train as it toured eight southern states. Maime's legacy

also extends to the University of Texas Permian Basin's library. As the Odessa chairman of the book drive which founded the library in the early 1970s, she helped obtain over 300,000 books to start the collection that students at the University of Texas Permian Basin still use to this day.

Maime's dedication to her many cultural and philanthropic pursuits was admirable, as was the stable and loving home she provided for her family. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Alfred and Honey Shepperd, her daughter and son-in-law, Suzanne and Gary McIntosh, nine grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren. Please join me in remembering the extraordinary life of Maime Shepperd.

**YURITZI MORA**

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Yuritzi Mora for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Yuritzi Mora is a 12th grader at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Yuritzi Mora is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Yuritzi Mora for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

REMEMBERING A HEINOUS ATTACK AGAINST THE KURDISH PEOPLE

**HON. TIM WALBERG**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pause and remember a heinous attack against the Kurdish people that occurred 27 years ago this week.

On March 16, 1988, Saddam Hussein's regime dropped chemical weapons on the city of Halabja, killing 5,000 innocent men, women, and children.

Thousands more suffered permanent injuries.

This crime against humanity was the worst part of a larger campaign of more than 40 gas attacks aimed at exterminating the Kurds.

The Kurdish people, however, have proudly persevered, rebuilt, and now provide stability and an ally in an often unstable region.

Today, while we look back on this solemn anniversary, it is important to offer our gratitude to the Kurdish people for their courage and sacrifice in the current fight to defeat our mutual enemy ISIL.

THANKS MR. BASEM MUALLEM FOR YOUR SERVICE TO CALTRANS DISTRICT 8

**HON. PAUL COOK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bid farewell to Basem Muallem who will be retiring after 29 years with Caltrans at the end of March. A true man of the people, Muallem will always be remembered as an extraordinary leader who listened and understood the growing infrastructure needs of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. As District 8 Director, Muallem is currently responsible for the largest of the 12 statewide Caltrans districts geographically, with four interstates and 32 routes totaling over 7,000 lane miles within its boundaries. Muallem manages a staff of 1,280 and an operating budget of \$181 million. He oversees all facets of design, construction, operation and maintenance of the state highway system in the greater Inland Empire region. Muallem works in partnership with both regional transportation and local resource agencies to provide a safe and reliable highway network for the traveling public. For as long as I have been in public office, our region continues to face massive growth. As more people, businesses and vehicles come into the area, the challenges of providing a highway system to meet the region's growing needs increase. Muallem has been a good friend to these needs in the various positions he has held within Caltrans. What's next for him you might ask? Muallem, who holds a Bachelors of Science degree in biology, and a Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees in Civil Engineering is headed to Parsons corporation, an engineering and construction company. I wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. CARL DJERASSI

**HON. JACKIE SPEIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 18, 2015*

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the iconic Dr. Carl Djerassi who died at the age of 91 on January 30, 2015. In the weeks since his death, a great deal has been said about Dr. Djerassi.

Most of these comments focus on his key role in developing the contraceptive pill. Because Dr. Djerassi and two other scientists were able to synthesize norethindrone, a key ingredient of the pill was finally available for widespread use and commercialization. The human race owes Dr. Djerassi a great deal.

Because women were finally able to control their own fertility, they were able to spend time in school, obtain work and to fully join the economy. Millennia spent bearing children and being denied education and advancement due to the demands of raising children were now upended in those nations that embraced artificial contraception. The pill is often characterized as a great advancement for women but in truth all human beings were advanced as women were freed to increasingly contribute their talents and intellect fully to the great research and economic challenges of their eras.